

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING
PARTNERSHIP OFFICE
23 Royce Circle**

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2015

3:00 PM

MINUTES

Present: Chair Tom Callahan, Fran Archambault, Matt Hart, Dave Pepin, Paul Shapiro, and Bill Simpson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

Tom Callahan called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes from April 23, 2015, and May 28, 2015

Matt Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of April 23, 2015. Fran Archambault seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Matt Hart made a motion to approve the minutes of May 28, 2015. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. Mr. Archambault, Dave Pepin and Paul Shapiro abstained. The motion was approved.

3. Review of June 30, 2015 (End of Fiscal Year) Financials

Cynthia van Zelm reported that the Main Street Investment Fund Grant and the STEAP 4 Grant had been closed.

Mr. Hart reiterated that the Town's portion of the Storrs Center parking garage over-run will be paid for with Storrs Center revenues.

There is an approximately \$1 to \$1.5 million over-run for the Storrs Center infrastructure projects. The CT DOT unexpected administrative charges, utility costs, were among the causes for the over-run. Contingency was included in the budgets but it was used. Mr. Hart indicated that the over-run for all projects should be paid off in 3 to 5 years.

Ms. van Zelm said the Finance Dept. is still working on a revised grants report. Mr. Callahan asked that the report be done by the September Finance and Administration Committee meeting and that it include a report on the Town Square revenue and expenditures.

In response to a comment from Mr. Shapiro about the 7 year tax abatement given to EdR, Mr. Hart said the abatement is in year 3 on 1 Royce Circle, and year 4 for 1, 9, and 11 Dog Lane. Mr. Hart reiterated that Storrs Center is being financed outside the Town's General Fund and no municipal debt has been issued.

Harry Birkenruth said it was important to convey that the percentage the Town has put into the over-run is not a big number. Mr. Hart said it was approximately 3 percent on approximately \$30 million in contributions.

Mr. Pepin asked about the status of the appeal of some of the Storrs Center commercial taxes by Hart Realty on behalf of the property owner. Mr. Hart said a court date has been set. Any proposed settlement would need to be brought back to the Town Council in Executive Session.

Mr. Hart said a future meeting could be held to review the tax assessment appeal process.

4. Update and Discussion of Transportation Coordinator position

Cynthia van Zelm said that some Board members had asked about whether the Transportation Center position should include benefits. Ms. van Zelm said benefits may also help with recruiting candidates. The position had been previously approved and advertised without benefits.

Mr. Hart said that it is up to the employer via its policies whether it wants to offer a full slate of benefits.

After discussion, the Committee asked that Mr. Hart and Ms. van Zelm research how much additional benefits would cost the Town and the Partnership and bring that information to the next Board meeting. In the meantime, interviews should be scheduled with prospective candidates.

Mr. Hart left the meeting.

5. Review of Mansfield Downtown Priorities

Ms. van Zelm passed out a list of proposed key items for the Partnership to focus on as it moves forward to a full management organization. Kathleen Paterson, the Partnership's Communications and Special Projects Manager, joined the meeting for this agenda item discussion.

Ms. van Zelm recommended that an organizational and funding strategy be developed and that an outside consultant help the Partnership with this endeavor. If approved by the Committee, and then the Board of Directors, her goal is to get out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in the early fall.

Mr. Birkenruth expressed concern about the cost of a quality review. He also advocated for more discussion amongst the players – Partnership, EdR, Hart/Wilder, and Leyland, before hiring a consultant.

Ms. van Zelm also reviewed a draft request to the main partners in Storrs Center for event funding. The timing is important because they do their 2016 budgets in the fall.

The Committee endorsed bringing the proposal for an RFQ for a consultant and the proposal for event funding to the Board of Directors for its endorsement.

6. Storrs Center Update

Ms. van Zelm provided an update on the status of the Oaks move-ins, retail leasing, and the timing of the opening of Wilbur Cross Way. She said most of Storrs Center should be complete in August 2016.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Pepin made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm